South Carolina Forestry Commission

FOREST HEALTH

2019 SOUTH CAROLINA HIGHLIGHTS

Figure 1. A stand of 20 year old loblolly pine infested with Ips engraver beetles.

The Resource

South Carolina's forest cover 12.9 million acres, which is 63% of the state's land area. The majority of the state's forested land is in nonindustrial private ownership, covering about 11.4 million acres, with approximately 629,000 acres in national forests.

Forestry is the most important manufacturing industry in South Carolina, providing 84,000 jobs and a total economic impact of $21 billion annually. $1.3 billion in forest products are exported from South Carolina and forest products are the number one export commodity from the port of Charleston. Trees are South Carolina's number one harvested crop. South Carolina's forests are known for their scenic beauty, attracting tourism, outdoor recreation, and providing wildlife habitat from the Appalachian Mountains in the upstate to the Atlantic Coastal Plain.

Major forest types in South Carolina include oak-hickory, loblolly and shortleaf pine, mixed oak-pine, and oak-gum-cypress. Longleaf and slash pine forests, once more widespread, now make up four percent of South Carolina's forests, with other minor forest types accounting for an additional six percent.

Forest Issues and Influences

Southern pine beetle (SPB)/Pine engraver beetles (*Ips* spp.)

The most damaging pest of southern pine forests historically has been the southern pine beetle (SPB). Surveys for SPB conducted in the spring of 2019 detected rising populations in McCormick and Edgefield Counties. A total of 4,398 SPB were trapped from 32 counties.

Redbay mortality (laurel wilt disease)

Caused by the fungus *Raffaelea lauricola* and vectored by the redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*) laurel wilt has killed many redbay trees along South Carolina's coast and continues to spread along bottomlands in the interior of the state. We are also seeing sassafras infected.

Cogongrass

As of 2018 a total of 13 infestations of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) have been identified. Of these, only four remain active. All known sites are monitored to combat cogongrass where it is still active or to ensure that managed sites remain inactive.

Hurricane Dorian

This October South Carolina was hit by Hurricane Dorian, but cursory aerial surveys revealed only flooding damage limited to riparian forests.

Drought

The summer of 2019 was extremely dry for the middle part of the state. This resulted in increased *Ips* activity at the end of the summer in Allendale, Lexington, Richland and Orangeburg Counties.

Forest Health Assistance in South Carolina

For more information or assistance, please contact:

South Carolina Forestry Commission
PO Box 21707
Columbia, SC 29221
(803) 896-8838
djenkins@scfc.gov

USDA Forest Service
Southern Region, State & Private Forestry
Forest Health Protection
200 W.T. Weaver Road
Asheville, NC 28804
(828) 257-4320